



An Investment in Latino Youth

## MEMO to the National Board

ASPIRA National Office

### Bridging the Digital Divide: ASPIRA Takes National Lead in Technology

April 2000

#### WE ARE BACK!

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#### ASPIRA's Community Technology Centers

Last October, ASPIRA received a \$950,000 three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education to establish four Community Technology Centers (CTCs). The first year, centers are being established at ASPIRA of IL, and ASPIRA of PA. ASPIRA of CT and ASPIRA de P.R. will follow this year. The purpose of the CTCs is to provide access to computers and the Internet to parents, students and other community members in low-income communities. The CTCs are a community-based technology lab open after school and on weekends with networked computers and Internet access, where courses are offered and where participants can even take laptops home. Each CTC offers students and the community formal hands-on workshops on use of computers (Windows), computer applications (e.g., MS Word, Excel, Power Point, Access) and use of the Internet. The centers can be used to help students with homework, academic enrichment, gaining computer skills, and with seeking information on colleges and careers. Adults may seek jobs, write resumes or explore education/training opportunities.

ASPIRA of Illinois and ASPIRA of Pennsylvania received over \$100,000 in computers (20 workstations, 7 laptops and a server each). The National Office helped set up the CTCs at the Antonia Pantoja High School (IL) and the E.M. de Hostos Charter School (PA). Both centers are operational with full T-1 or ADSL access to the Internet.

The National Office also developed a model curriculum on use of computers, applications and the Internet, in addition to an Implementation Manual, Standards for the CTCs, and a Web Site with a host of



on-line resources. The CTC Web Site, <http://ctc.aspira.org/>, includes full versions of the curriculum that can be downloaded free. In Illinois, three groups of 20 parents are already taking classes at the CTC and there is a waiting list for additional classes. In Pennsylvania, classes will start in

May 2000. ASPIRA de P.R. and ASPIRA of CT are already planning their CTCs, for an October 2000 start.

The CTCs are a major part of ASPIRA's strategic objective (see Strategic Plan) to significantly enhance access and the use of technology throughout the Association.

#### ASPIRA Becomes a Model

ASPIRA has been recognized as the most advanced CTC by the Department of Education. At the invitation of the U.S. Department of Education, ASPIRA presented its Information Technology (IT) model at a gathering of over 400 government and non-profit organization representatives. ASPIRA's presentation, lauded by the attendees, clearly showed how advanced the organization is in IT. The response to the presentation and contacts with other organizations nationally has been phenomenal. ASPIRA has received a host of requests for presentations at conferences and meetings across the country. In addition, since launching the CTC Web Site there have been numerous requests for ASPIRA's CTC materials from across the country.

#### ASPIRA of NJ Receives \$825,000 for CTCs

The U.S. Department of Education just announced a new round of CTCs. With the support of the National Office, ASPIRA of New Jersey was awarded \$850,000 for five new CTCs across New Jersey. The National Office will provide set-up, technical assistance, materials and overall support for the new CTCs, scheduled to be opened by mid-December, 2000.

#### New Partnership With Power-Up

**Power Up**, an initiative of the Case Foundation (America On Line), with the Hewlett Packard Company, The Waitt Family Foundation (Gateway Computers), Fannie Mae, the Corporation for National Service, and several others, has received \$10 million per year for five years to establish CTCs



across the country. ASPIRA is signing on as a national partner. During the first year, **Power Up** will support 10 new ASPIRA CTCs (New York (2), Florida (2), Philadelphia, Connecticut and Puerto Rico), bringing the total num-

ber of ASPIRA CTCs to sixteen. **Power Up** will provide 10 computers for each center plus wiring and ISP services. Over the next two years, **Power Up** is expected to provide support for 41 ASPIRA CTCs of the 250 it will establish nationally each year. See: <http://www.powerup.org>

#### ASPIRA of IL Opens Technical College

ASPIRA of Illinois has opened a technical college to prepare students for careers in technology. This high-tech center is already offering programs in network technologies (Oracle), SQL, Operating Systems, computer assisted design (CAD) and web development, among others. With the assistance of the National Office, partnerships were established with Oracle, which provides training of faculty as well as the curriculum for their program and negotiations are being held with Sysco Systems to provide their networking certification program. The National Office has begun negotiations with Oracle and the municipality of Manatí, P.R. to establish a similar training program.

#### The ASPIRA Model MIS

The ASPIRA National Office has developed a comprehensive, Internet-based **Management Information System** for the entire Association. This MIS system will collect complete demographic information on **every** ASPIRANTE or participant in an ASPIRA program, as well as information on every service offered, either in group or individual settings. A series of surveys (data collection instruments) will be on-line, and can be completed from anywhere through the Internet. For those who may not have access to the Internet, forms will be available that can be scanned electronically with the information going directly into the database. The system, requested by the Executive Directors, will give ASPIRA, for the first time, a comprehensive database of participants and services that can be used by each Associate and by the Association.

#### APEX and MAS Academy in P.R.

APEX, ASPIRA's parent involvement model program is being implemented in 19 schools in Manatí, P.R. by ASPIRA de Puerto Rico. ASPIRA de P.R. secured a \$150,000 contract for APEX with the P.R. Department of Education. With the support of the National Office, ASPIRA de P.R. secured the contract with PRDOE as well as a collaboration with the Municipality of Manatí, which is providing facilities for the program. The National Office, under a \$15,000 contract with ASPIRA de P.R. will provide materials and technical assistance to the program.

The MAS Academy is being successfully implemented in Carolina P.R. Through a \$50,000 grant from the AT&T Foundation, the MAS Academy is serving 45 students this year.



Remember to visit: <http://www.aspira.org>

#### ASPIRA of NJ Holds 2<sup>nd</sup> Statewide Conference High School/High Tech A Success

ASPIRA of NJ held its second Statewide Conference on Education Reform last April 3, 4, 2000 in Atlantic City. Keynote addresses were delivered by ASPIRA's President, Ronald Blackburn Moreno, Elenor Horne, ETS, David Siarra, President of the Center for Law and Education, and the Commissioner of Education of the State of New Jersey. The conference, which focused on parental rights and responsibilities under the *Abbott* court decision, attracted over 450 participants, including parents, students and educators from across the state.

ASPIRA of NJ is implementing its High School/High Tech, a math and science program for students with disabilities. Twenty-five students are currently participating in the program, funded through a grant to the National Office by the U.S. Department of Labor.

#### ASPIRA of PA, IL to Send Teachers to NASA



Under an agreement between NASA and the National Office, ASPIRA of PA will send between 5 and 10 math and science teachers to the NASA Teachers Summer Training Institute at Goddard Space Flight Center this summer. Teachers will be trained in the use of NASAs math and science enrichment curriculum.

ASPIRA of IL will send 2 to 4 teachers from their technical school to NASA this summer also to learn Web Page Development. These teachers will then establish the Spanish version of NASAs Environment Web Site.

#### ASPIRA of FL Board Retreat, Advances in Technology

The ASPIRA of FL Board held a strategic planning retreat on April 1, 2000. Ronald Blackburn-Moreno made a presentation on the history of ASPIRA and the current socio-economic environment.

Mr. John Villamil, Executive Vice President and Mr. Blackburn also participated in a day of planning on the development of technology at ASPIRA of FL. With funding from ASPIRA's organizational Development fund, ASPIRA of FL will wire and network its Windwood building as part of its upgrades in computer technology.

#### ASPIRA of NY, CT & NJ To Hold Fundraiser NY Advances in Technology As Well

ASPIRA of NY, CT and NJ have joined to hold a major fundraising luncheon in NYC on May 22 at the NY Hilton. The event, *Circle of Achievers*, will honor Latinos in Corporate America.

ASPIRA of NY has established a CTC at its main office and is using the National Office's curriculum. Two new CTCs will start at two Beacon Schools this year.